

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ABOUT LIFESAFER INC. LifeSafer, Inc., located in Blue Ash, Ohio, is an industry leader in ignition interlock technology, designed to keep impaired drivers off the road. The company, which was the first to develop an interlock device that met the standards of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), refurbishes out-of-date interlock devices to current NHTSA certification standards. The company has 60 employees.

THE CHALLENGE. A significant regulatory change for NHTSA-certified devices was expected to result in a heavy influx of refurbishment work for LifeSafer. In preparation for the increased workload, LifeSafer partnered with TechSolve (part of Ohio MEP and a NIST MEP affiliate) to incorporate Lean Thinking into its management approach while balancing budgetary, capital expenditure, and physical space constraints. Over a four-month span, the team implemented a series of visual management tools and adopted time study techniques. They also identified and addressed root causes of issues that were producing shop floor delays and causing devices to be incorrectly diagnosed as defective in the field.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. To foster cultural change, managers were challenged to focus every day on Lean Thinking. Daily huddles were instituted to keep managers in close contact with their teams. Supervisors were coached on ways to be more effective on the floor, reducing the time technicians spent seeking guidance on repairs.

To address device misdiagnosis, a process-savvy, problem-solving technician was identified and coached to become the internal champion for a new triage program to gather and document accurate information to prioritize repairs. In a pilot test of the triage process, a single technician using a single rapid test was able to handle a workload that previously required multiple people.

"TechSolve's Alex Jones was exactly what the LifeSafer repair operation needed. Working with Alex has been a great experience. Not only did he help our operation achieve many of our goals, he directly contributed to our need to change our cultural behavior — an absolute 'must' in order for our operation to grow."

-David Soper, Director of Operations

RESULTS



Gained **25%** increase in productivity repairing NHTSA devices



Increased first-pass yield from **50%** to 99%



Increased throughput on an existing assembly line by **120%**

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